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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/688,677	10/17/2003	Don V. Carruth	DNPS-30176	2624

27883 7590 01/10/2006

GRADY K. BERGEN
3333 LEE PARKWAY
SUITE 600
DALLAS, TX 75219

EXAMINER

NEUDER, WILLIAM P

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3672

DATE MAILED: 01/10/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/688,677	CARRUTH, DON V.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	William P. Neuder	3672	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 18 November 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5,7-12 and 14-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5,7-12 and 14-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 1-5,7-12 and 14-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gibson 2,883,940 (applied in previous action).

Gibson discloses a gas/liquid separator (figure 1). The separator is part of tubing string 13 for use in a well. A tubular outer conduit 31 has a lower inlet 48 for introducing gas and liquid. The outer conduit has an upper outlet 33 to allow fluids to pass to the exterior of the outer conduit. A tubular inner conduit 20 is disposed within the interior of the outer conduit. An inlet 53 introduces liquids discharged from the outer conduit into the flow passage of the inner conduit. The inner and outer conduits are rigidly joined together at their lower ends. An adapter 18 engages the inner and outer conduits at the other end of the conduits. The adapter prevents lateral movement but allows relative

Art Unit: 3672

longitudinal movement between the inner and outer conduits regardless of how the force is applied (i.e. compression or tension). Gibson is considered to disclose all of the claimed features except for the adapter 18 being threaded to the inner member. The adapter 18 of Gibson is threaded at the uphole end of the device to the outer member. It would have been considered an obvious reversal of parts to thread adapter 18 to the inner member as opposed to the outer member since the adapter will perform its function equally well when threaded to the outer or inner member. As to claims 2,9 and 17, means 22 provides sealing engagement between the inner and outer conduits. As to claims 3,10 and 18, means 22 is a seal. As to claims 4,11 and 19, means 41 is a coupler having an outer conduit port 48 and an inner conduit port 53 that are isolated from one another. As to claims 5,12 and 20, the outer conduit has threads on both ends for engagement with the tubing string. As to claims 7,14 and 21, both the inner and outer conduits are threaded for engagement with the coupler. The coupler having inlets 48 and 53 that are not in communication with one another. As to claim 8, a packer 50 is provided. As to method claim 15, fluids are introduced through the packer to the outer conduit and out openings 33. The gas flowing upwardly and the oil flowing to inlet 53 where it is produced to the surface. As to claim 16, the tubing string is attached at the surface and therefore inherent that tension will be continuously applied to the tubing string.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 16-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 16-21 are all method claims that depend from apparatus claim 14. It is believed these claims should depend from method claim 15 and have so been treated.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-5, 7-12 and 14-21 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to William P. Neuder whose telephone number is 571-272-7032. The examiner can normally be reached on Tuesday through Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David J. Bagnell can be reached on 571-272-6999. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Application/Control Number: 10/688,677
Art Unit: 3672

Page 5



William P Neuder
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3672

W.P.N.